ABSTRACT

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDES OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS TOWARD INCLUSION

Advisor: Brenda Rogers, Ph. D

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The primary focus of this study was to examine regular educators' and exceptional educators' attitudes toward the inclusion of special needs students in regular education settings. The study involved 8 regular education teachers and 8 special education teachers from Dekalb County, Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools. All of the subjects were enrolled in graduate school at Clark Atlanta University. The investigation utilized the Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES). The scale contains sixteen items describing social, physical, academic and behavioral problems that may adversely affect functioning in the classroom. ATIES was utilized in seeking the answers to the following hypotheses:

1. Regular education teachers have negative attitudes toward including students with disabilities in their classrooms.
2. Special educators do not have negative attitudes toward inclusion.

The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that regular educators' perception of inclusion is not negative. The results of this study clearly show that many teachers agreed with the majority of the questions on the ATIES Scale.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDES OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS TOWARD INCLUSION

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STACI D. GRAHAM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Countless Americans suffer from one or more physical or mental disabilities, and the number is expected to increase as our society ages. Until recently, these individuals often were removed or segregated from the mainstream of society. In spite of laws designed to correct this situation, many forms of discrimination occurred, in our schools and societies. Educators must acquire a positive attitude toward the education of students with disabilities and special needs. Accardo and Whitman (1996) and Snell (1993) concluded that definitions of disabilities provide basis from which identification practices evolve; reflect changing societal attitudes, values and adverse circumstances that may be temporary, permanent, reversible, irreversible, progressive or regressive. According to Howard, Williams, Port and Lepper (1997), the term "special needs children" indicates that special needs children and youth are identified as low birth weight at infancy, difficult temperament, presence of challenging aggressive behavior, cognitive deficits, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment.

Inclusive placements rely on the attitudes and skills of general educators as direct service providers, special educators as consultants, and of both as interactive and cooperative members of the education team (Mainzer, Mainzer, Slavin & Lowery, 1993; Marshall & Herrmenn, 1990). Concerns have been raised on several issues as more students at risk as well as students with special education needs attend general education

classrooms. Often the return of children with disabilities appears to alter the classroom teacher's role and responsibilities, requiring much more individualization than he or she has been prepared to implement (Evans 1990). Thus, the movement toward inclusive placements for more children with disabilities will require different roles for all educators. The ability to individualize instruction, to adopt role release behaviors, to feel confident enough to ask for help, to acknowledge diversity as a desirable component of a classroom or school environment, and to identify strengths in all students are only a few of the changes that both general and special educators must adopt (Mainzer et al., 1993).

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, many school systems have begun to move toward full inclusion. School administrators who try to implement new teaching techniques find it very difficult when they do not have the support of teachers. It is ultimately the teachers' responsibility to ensure that all children are learning to their maximum potential. Implementing any policy without providing the proper training will eventually result in barriers to its success.

Although inclusive education for students with moderate to severe disabilities has received broad support (Biklen, 1985; Brown & Long, 1989; Jorgensen, 1992; Meyer, Peck & Brown, 1991; Sailor, Gee, & Karasoff, 1993), presently there is not a commonly accepted definition. For some, inclusive education means that all students with moderate to severe disabilities are served exclusively in regular classes (Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989; Tashie & Schuh, 1994). When specialized services for students with moderate to severe needs are necessary to meet their needs, these services are provided in the regular classroom. Others argue that inclusion should be tailored to each student's educational needs (Brown, 1989; Sailor, 1993). While they agree that placement in

regular classes is a necessary condition for successful inclusion to occur, they also assert that some students may require specialized instruction outside the regular class to meet their needs.

It is unlikely that the debate about how much time students should spend in regular classes should be resolved quickly. However, there is a clear consensus in the field that all students with moderate to severe disabilities can benefit from inclusive education experiences (Meyer, Peck & Brown). According to Howard, Williams, Port and Lepper (1996), exceptional children need time limitation in inclusive settings. In grades pre-kindergarten-third, timed limitation instruction should evolve around flexible transitional stage planning and preparing for post transitional planning.

Research Problems and Hypotheses

This study was designed to measure regular educators' and exceptional educators' attitudes toward inclusion. The problem involved in this study is to find out if there is an overall negative attitude toward including students with special needs in their classrooms.

This study will confirm or reject the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Is there significant differences in regular and exceptional educators' attitudes toward inclusive classrooms?

Hypothesis 2: Is there significant differences in negative attitudes of regular and exceptional education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion?

Justification for the Research

The inclusion of students classified as disabled in mainstream schools and classrooms has been the dominant discourse among special educators during this decade. Yet, inclusion has not become a reality in many schools. Even in situations in which school personnel claim to favor inclusion, various signs of pullout and separation continue to exist (Brantlinger, 1996). In recognition of the reality that school restructuring and reform efforts repeatedly failed to have much impact on traditional school structures and practices, it has been acknowledged that the beliefs of school personnel can be a conservative force that impedes and obstructs change (Cuban, 1988; Goodlad, 1984, 1988; Sarason, 1990; Fullen & Hargreaves, 1992). The optimal implementation of inclusion, therefore, requires not only a change in school policy but also a change in the beliefs of those who work in schools (Brantlinger, 1996). Justification for full inclusion has been researched by Salisbury, Palombaro and Long (1993); Hanline (1993); and McGee, Paradis, and Feldman (1993). They concluded that the practice of full inclusion can be justified if social, ethical, legal, and physical conditions are identified and properly assessed. Their research supported the notion that facilitated inclusion models lead to higher frequency of interaction that enhanced the development of adaptive and social skills of children and youth with disabilities. Howard, Willliams, Port, and Lepper's (1996) studies indicate that preschoolers with special needs or disabilities enrolled in inclusive programs had peers that were more accepting of them than when they reached the self contained classes in the middle grades.

Regular educators' attitudes and perceptions can determine the success or failure of an inclusive environment at all grade levels. Shaping attitudes from negative to

positive is one of the tasks that administrators must perform. In order for inclusion to be effective, it is generally agreed that the school personnel who will be the most responsible for its success be receptive to its principles and demands (Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989).

A study is therefore needed to better understand teachers' perceptions of inclusion in the year of 2000. Information acquired through this study will attempt to see if regular and special educators' perceptions of inclusion are negative or positive.

Methodology

Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale

Description

This scale concerns "inclusive education" as one method of meeting the legal requirements for placing students with disabilities in the "least restrictive" educational environment. Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by a specialist. The Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) was designed to measure educators' attitudes toward including children with various disabilities in regular classes (Wilczenski, 1992).

Outline of the Report

This study will utilize 8 special education teachers and 8 regular education teachers from Dekalb County, Fulton County and Atlanta Public Schools. The Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale will be given to each subject to measure his or her

attitude toward inclusion. This questionnaire will seek to secure straight forward responses to each question.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms in this study are defined as follow:

Accountability - Obligated to account for one's acts or responsibilities. An education that promotes equality for all students is subject to the same assessment questions that any educational approach must answer (Lerner, 1993).

Collaboration - Group effort of special education teachers, regular education teachers, other service providers, and families working together to provide the best possible services and education. Collaborative networks are groups of people who assist in exploring advanced educational issues. (Smith & Luckasson, 1992, McNergney & Herbert, 1988).

Cooperative Learning – A set of instructional strategies that emphasize the use of groups for teaching students techniques of problem solving and working constructively with others (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 1993).

Co-Teaching – Based on regular and special educators jointly planning teaching and evaluating all learners in the integrated classroom (Smith & Luckasson, 1992, Friend & Cook, 1996).

Full inclusion – The policy of placing and instructing all children, including categories of disability and levels of severity, in their neighborhood school and in the regular classroom (Lerner, 1993).

Functional skill instruction – Teaching survival skills to enable students to get along in the outside world (Learner, 1993).

Inclusion - The belief that all children with disabilities should be educated in regular education classrooms in their neighborhood schools. Most often it is used to describe programs for students with disabilities but is also extended to include students from different cultures, students at risk for failure because of drug and alcohol abuse, and other students with special needs (Olson, and Platt, 1992).

Least restrictive environment – A major principle of IDEA that states that students with handicaps should be integrated and receive their education in the most normal setting possible (Smith & Luckasson, 1992).

Mainstreaming - The process of integrating children with special needs into classes and schools with their typical peers (Olson & Platt, 1992).

Learning disability - A handicapping condition where the individual possesses average intelligence but is substantially delayed in academic achievement (Smith & Luckasson, 1992).

Mainstreaming – The process of bringing exceptional children into daily contact with nonexceptional children in an educational setting; the placement of exceptional children in the regular education program whenever possible (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1993).

Multidisciplinary team – A group of professionals who work with children with disabilities to help them achieve their full potential. A team comprised of a group of professionals that utilize diagnostic and treatment approaches for various areas of exceptionalities. For example, the interactions among professionals representing two or

more disciplines are limited to each professional's independent case formulation (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1993).

Normalization – The creation of as normal as possible a learning and social environment for the exceptional child and adult. The philosophy and principal of making available to all people with developmental disabilities regardless of the severity of their disabilities daily experiences and activities that are culturally normative as close as possible to the prevailing patterns of mainstream society (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 1993).

Parental participation – The inclusion of parents in the development of their child's individualized education program, and their right to access their child's educational records (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 1993).

Prereferral Process – Early intervention in response to observable, developing problems may preclude the need for later placement in special education (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 1993).

Special education - Programs and instruction for children with physical, mental, emotional or learning handicaps or gifted students who need special educational services in order to achieve at their ability level (Smith & Luckasson, 1992).

Conclusion

The bottom line of this controversial issue tends to lean toward teacher's attitudes and perceptions. It would be difficult for any child to learn in a negative environment whether they are in regular education or have been identified as having a disability. Teachers are in total control of their own classrooms and enforce their own beliefs

whether intentionally or unintentionally. There definitely needs to be a positive transition from special education into an inclusive environment. Students with learning disabilities already enter the classroom at a disadvantage. They do not need an uninformed teacher inflicting his/her negative beliefs on them. This inclusive placement may be the least restrictive environment but is far from the most educational. Teacher sensitivity training, hopefully, will change some of the negative attitudes that regular educators have regarding inclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusion originated in New Zealand, England, and Canada where it was currently being implemented in educational environments (Gage, 1994). There were also a number of schools in Italy, Australia, and the United States that were successfully implementing inclusion. Inclusion appears to be the act of improving a normalized educational experience for all children with disabilities. The new move toward inclusion has caused a great controversy in many school systems. Parents and teachers have expressed great concern about the new placement of students with disabilities (Stainback & Stainback, 1992).

Inclusion as a general concept means that all children, regardless of their disability or the severity of their disability, should have access to and participate in their natural communities, those in which they would have participated if they did not have disabilities. For education, this involved attending the school and classroom attended by their siblings and neighborhood age-mates who do not have disabilities (Werts, Caldwell, Snyder & Lisowski).

Inclusion is a term used by the education reform movement to challenge schools to the philosophy that all students can learn, even those with disabilities. The terms used in the special education literature prior to the reform movement were least restrictive environment (LRE) and mainstreaming. LRE is the language of the Education for the

Handicapped Children Act (EHA) passed in 1975 by U.S. Congress and states that all children with disabilities should be educated to the maximum extent possible with their nondisabled peers. From this act, the term "mainstreaming" evolved with its focus on placement of disabled students in general education classes. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 also focused attention on the inclusion of the disabled in schools and the work force in the private as well as public sectors. Many researchers including Will (1986), Wang and Walberg (1988), Lilly (1988), and Stainback and Stainback (1992) McNergney and Herbert (1998) directed their efforts toward inclusion programming and the movement for full inclusion. They suggested that some of the present practices of special education do not work and are expensive. Kauffman and Hallahan (1997) indicate that the restructuring of special education would threaten present and future services for special needs students with disabilities. They indicate that the debate about inclusion serves to focus regular and special educators on the need to avoid unilateral approaches, seek most appropriate placements, and utilize global multicultural methods for students with special needs.

Inclusion has become the buzzword across the United States. Since the passage of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1977 (PL 94-142) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (PL 101-476) there has been a mandate that eligible students with special needs be provided with an array of services at the site they would attend if they did not have special needs and that this must be the least restrictive environment. In establishing programs for persons with special needs to participate in an inclusive setting, it has been suggested that several components be included such as atmosphere and culture for change, the provisions for an opportunity to

articulate a vision of inclusion, the planning and provision of appropriate resources, documenting and monitoring programs, and the provision of ongoing training for the staff and families. Ortiz and Garcia (1988) suggest that in providing an appropriate education, a prereferral process should be employed to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals and ensure appropriate support services for the persons with special needs.

As we move toward the education goals for the schools in the year 2000, the current trend in the United States is to serve students with special needs in inclusive settings with persons who are not disabled as much as possible. Goals 2000, the regular education initiative and the CEC policy on inclusive schools and community settings recommended changes in the preparation of children and youth. Howard (1996) in Goals 2000 and the SCANS report, reported that mildly intellectually disabled adolescents should receive services in multi-educational environments, including regular/inclusive classrooms, and during career vocational transitional training. Regular and exceptional educators must adhere to plans that emphasize cooperative teaching in inclusive multi-diverse settings. The research reported by Slavin (1987, 1990) demonstrated that students with special needs improved their social interaction and academic performance in inclusive settings utilizing cooperative teaching strategies. West and Idol (1991) reported that students with special needs in the regular education setting required collaboration on the part of all persons who served the students. Davis (1989) reported that if inclusion is to be implemented successfully, it must become integrated into the entire education system to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Olson and Platt (1997) indicate that inclusive education would replace the regular education initiative (REI) commencing the 21st century as one of the primary educational

reform issues facing exceptional and regular education. Presently educational programs for exceptional students has been provided through a delivery of service options and plans. The projected adoption, according to Hallahan and Kauffman (1997), Olson and Platt (1997), and Friend and Cook (1996), will focus on full inclusion for most exceptionalities. They concluded that most models advocating full inclusion would infuse the following:

1. All students would attend or be assigned to the school to which they would attend if no disability existed.

2. Exceptional education support services would be provided within the context of general education and other integrated environments.

3. Peer instructional methods and cooperative education methods must be infused in general instructional practices and designated educational sites.

4. The age and grade placement issue must be utilized and the self contained exceptional education classes eliminated where feasible.

5. The zero-rejection policy must be updated so exceptional students with disabilities would not be excluded on the basis of type or extent of disability.

For the implementation of the concept of full inclusion to take place, everyone including the parents, teachers, administrators, and other related service staff must buy into the concept. Inclusion as it has been embraced by the special education field appears to have many meanings. To these authors, inclusion means providing a full continuum of service delivery options to all students with special needs in all settings. Students in inclusive schools work in flexible learning environments with the implementation of

teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, peer mediated learning, collaborative and team teaching (Schragg & Burnette, 1993).

Some groups such as The Association For Retarded Citizens, United Cerebral Palsy, and The Association For Persons with Severe Handicaps have been strong advocates for the inclusion movement. These groups want to eliminate segregated classrooms as well as pull out special education programs. They hope to create a better social environment at school by bringing services for children with handicaps into the regular classroom (Jobe, Rust & Brissie, 1996).

The CEC (1993) policies on the implementation of inclusive schools strongly believes the following:

1. Children, youth, adolescents and young adults with disabilities are entitled to services that lead to productive lives [i.e., Independent living, community and society participation] and a free appropriate education.

2. Exposed access to a variety of educational, intervention, and vocational options.

3. Parent and advocate input are vital members in planning, placement, curriculum options, and final exit documentations.

4. The concept of inclusion is a meaningful goal to pursue the 21st century for all exceptional children and youth with disabilities.

5. The accessibility to academic and service related programs and experiences must be based on desired outcomes and educational needs.

In the following review, three main areas will be considered: first, the importance of inclusion; second, the perceptions of regular educators toward students with disabilities; and third, the major controversies surrounding inclusion.

The Importance of Inclusion

Education has undergone many evolutions. Free public education for all youngsters has been interpreted in various ways depending upon social, economic and physical conditions. As late as the 1950s there were few allowances made for individuals differences in learning disabilities. Teachers taught the lesson to the large heterogeneous group. Those who were able to pass the test were sent to the next grade. Those who failed were held back, sometimes more than once in the same grade. In the 1950s federal title programs for education began to take effect, providing funding for specialists in remedial reading and math. At the time, universities were offering courses in special education to train teachers with alternate strategies for students who were unable to succeed. By the end of the 1960s in parallel with the civil rights movement, placement of students in special classes was criticized. Critics of special education question whether "separate but equal" was appropriate. The Education for Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142), mandated that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment. Schools and teachers assumed new and expanding roles (Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997).

The Education for Handicapped Children Act passed in 1975 (PL 94-142) guaranteed that students with disabilities would receive as much of their education as possible with students who are not disabled. While the intent to educate students with

disabilities in the least restrictive environment is to be commended, historically the success of mainstreaming seemed to be the burden of the student with the disability. If the student's performance in the mainstream did not meet expectations, the student returned to the special education classroom.

Today, many school districts are moving in the direction of integrating all students into the regular education classroom. This trend in reform is an alternative to self-contained instruction and pull out remediation. The motive for change is driven by the benefits a diverse school population will receive. Consistent with the intent of the Education for all Handicapped Act of 1975, handicapped students are returning to the regular classroom for instruction (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997). Published literature on inclusion shows increased recommendations to reintegrate special education students into the regular classroom. This change brings about the importance for collaboration among professionals and cooperative teaching inside the classroom. The primary platform for inclusive education is collaboration and co-teaching. A teaching team consisting of subject specialist and teaching strategies has great potential for meeting the needs for all students (Morrison, 1997). The importance of teacher training, administrative support, and attitudes toward students' achievement may influence the success or failure of inclusive education (Bergren, 1997).

Changes our nation faces as we grow into the 21st century are parallel to the growing concerns in education. Some suggest that current approaches to education should be updated. Many believe that school reform is necessary to produce a society of workers who are qualified for the job market in the year 2000 (Morrison, 1997). National level demographic changes in the job market, family make-up, and social economic status

bring a new student profile into our schools. While numbers of students with disabilities have increased significantly, current programs and procedures that identify handicapped youngsters are not solving the problem. Most recent reform movements in special education advocate less isolation and more inclusion, thus reducing self-contained classrooms by teaching all students in the regular classrooms. Most recent laws governing special education state that school districts are to promote and carry out the regular education initiative (REI) through a merger between special education and regular education (Davis, 1989; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997; Lerner, 1993; Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989).

Roach (1995) defined inclusion as the provision of educational services to students with a full range of abilities and disabilities in the general classroom with appropriate in class support. This philosophical stance is in sharp contrast to the traditional concept of "mainstreaming" where students with disabilities are placed in general education classes for part of the school day while maintaining their home base in special education. With "mainstreaming," placement in regular education settings is tolerated with the knowledge that the child will return to the special education classroom after a specific period of time (Schroth, Moorman, & Fullwood, 1997). Therefore, professional collaboration can enhance education in inclusive classrooms.

Professional collaboration by regular and exceptional educators must be initiated and implemented by itinerant teachers, resource teachers, diagnosticians, physical therapists, and occupational therapists according to Morrison (1997). These exceptional educators are active transmitters of information from colleagues, parents, advocates, and administrators in public and private sectors. The message conveyed by them in traveling

from school to school and community to community have an impact on attitudes in general.

The implementation of an inclusive philosophy forces a profound shift from the mainstream paradigm. Teachers must come to grips with the belief that students with disabilities belong in the general education setting. Membership in regular classes is not a privilege, but a right. Bias in "mainstreaming " philosophy unwittingly nurtures the belief that children with disabilities do not belong, a belief challenged by inclusion (Schroth, Moorman, & Fullwood, 1997).

Since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990, schools have taken increased responsibility for providing educational` programs for students with disabilities in general education settings as much as possible. As we move toward the education goals in the schools 2000, the current trend in the United States is to serve students with special needs in inclusive settings with persons who are not disabled as much as possible. The research reported by Slavin (1987, 1990) demonstrated that students with special needs improved their social interactions and academic performance in inclusive settings. Rationales for including students with disabilities in general education include improved learning opportunities, enhanced development of students' friendships, better preparation for adult living, and the moral and legal rights of individuals (Pearpoint, Forest, & Snow, 1992; Powers et al., 1991).

As with learning, attitude change toward students with disabilities can positively develop when appropriate guidance and direction from adults is provided in inclusive settings. That is, in inclusive settings, students can learn to understand, respect, be sensitive to, and grow comfortable with individual differences and similarities among

their peers (Stainback, Stainback, Moravec, & Jackson, 1992). Students can learn to interact, communicate, develop friendships, work together, and assist one another based on their individual strengths and needs (Hedeen, 1994).

Another major benefit that can occur as a result of school inclusion is that it prepares students for integrated community living. Wehman (1990) concluded that segregated classes do not lead to independence and competence, but instead foster an unreal sense of insulation.

The Perception of Regular Educators Toward Inclusion

What are the perceptions of general education teachers toward teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms? Much of the available relevant information is found in teacher surveys, which have been conducted from at least 1957 through 1995 (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). One specific survey conducted by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumell (1996) noted that within the focus group interview format, teachers expressed surprisingly strong feelings about the concepts of inclusion. Several of the teachers they surveyed were concerned that they were uninformed and unfamiliar with the notion of inclusion. They also wanted a more explicit understanding of teachers' roles. Often the return of children with disabilities appears to alter the classroom teacher's roles and responsibilities, requiring much more individualization then he/she has been prepared to implement (Evans, 1990). There may also be a dramatic change in the role of special and regular educators. Often this has been perceived from the special educator's view as devaluing his/her role to providing paraprofessional like support to the regular classroom teacher (Kerns & Hall, 1997). Inclusive placement also rely on

attitudes and skills of general educators as direct service providers, of special educators as consultants, and of both as interactive and cooperative members of the education team (Mainzer et al., 1993; Marshall & Herrmann, 1990).

Thus, the movement toward inclusive placement for more children with disabilities will require different roles for all educators. The ability to individualize instruction, to adopt role release behaviors, to feel confident enough to ask for help, to acknowledge diversity as a desirable component of a classroom school environment, and to identify strengths in all students are only a few of the changes that both general and special educators must adopt (Mainzer et al., 1993). One possible reason for the development of the extensive array of special education services and personnel was a response to the general educators perceived lack of specialized skills, time and resources in the regular classroom (Schumm, Vaughn & Rothlein, 1994). The time necessary and the amount of content required for teaching typical students was and is considered by many to preclude encompassing students who learn differently. The specialist were able to focus on the perceived special needs of the child and not on the general curriculum (Lewis & Doorlag, 1991). They were trained to work with specific skills and populations. Their work most frequently focused on small numbers of students at a time and often with the help of a teaching assistant. As a result, the ability of special educators to interpret the needs or frustrations of the general educator who has 20 or 30 students in a room may be limited by their lack of experience in a typical classroom (Blanton, Blanton & Cross, 1994).

Vaughn et al. (1996) found that regular and special education teacher views on inclusion were often expressed as fears that included concern for the academic success of

general and special education students, concerns about lawsuits, fears about workload, and general fears about how inclusion might be translated at the local level and what this would mean with respect to their roles. Related to teachers' strong feelings about inclusion were their emotional responses to the people they perceived as responsible for educational decisions such as inclusion. They describe these groups, administrators, policy makers, and university personnel as "out of touch" with what is going on in the schools; as people whose ideas work "in theory but not in practice" (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Teachers felt that school administrators were unaware of inclusion or were unlikely to consider their interests when establishing policies for inclusion. Teachers' comments reflected feelings that they had no power or control and that they just waited for the next wave of bad news to come to their classrooms (Vaughn et al., 1996).

In "Teachers' Views of Inclusion," Vaughn et al. (1996) noted that teachers' comments reflect their feelings that they had no power or control over any program change and that they just waited for the next wave of bad news to come to their classrooms. Many teachers felt that decisions about inclusion were made by school administrators who do not work with children on a daily basis and who do not fully understand the implications of their decisions. Teachers already feel abandoned in the classrooms when it comes to "support" from external sources, and when children are "dumped" into the classroom with no guidelines or assistance, the only result is failure.

Along with administrative concerns, teachers also felt that several factors contribute to the lack of success of inclusion. Parent involvement or teachers' perceptions of lack of involvement was a major inhibitor to successful inclusion. Funding is a major barrier. Inclusion would eliminate from the government special

funding for special education. Accountability was expressed as a problem (Lerner, 1993). Inclusion would bring additional paperwork and more accountability (Vaughn et al., 1996). Too many kids and too much paperwork causes too many problems. Teachers mentioned that the facilities of the school were inadequate, particularly for students with physical disabilities. Concerns were expressed about how students would be evaluated, how grades would be given, what would happen on tests, and what would occur if students were unable to meet the performance objectives. The teachers felt that team teaching could work, but it provided many opportunities for clashes.

Major Controversies Surrounding Inclusion

There is a wide range of beliefs about inclusion. Some educators believe that all children, including students with disabilities, should be included in general education classrooms, regardless of their ability to benefit from the mainstream curriculum. This is termed full inclusion and means excluding no student from general education classes. This inclusion placement achieves social inclusion, but no academic inclusion.

Other inclusion experts believe that the full inclusion model is not successful and is promoting failure and backlash among students, teachers, and parents. They believe that the question of benefits should be considered and that there should be varying levels of inclusion according to a set of conditions for successful and meaningful placement (Putnam, 1993).

In 1981 a task force on least restrictions was convened by the American Association on Mental Deficiency to study and to help clarify the principle so that it might be better understood and applied by professionals and other policy makers

(Turnbull, 1991). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, students of this principle were more concerned with how it applied to individuals in institutions who might be better served in their communities. Today, the application is more complex. Students with disabilities are largely being served in their community schools to varying degrees of integration. It is useful to compare those problems with applying the principle to least restrictive environment twenty years ago and today.

There are many reasons why the principle of least restrictive environment was written into special education law. The Individuals with Disabilities Act contains a presumption in favor of educating students who have disabilities with nondisabled students. Furthermore, a school may not remove the student from general education unless he or she can not be educated there successfully, even after the school provides supplementary aids and support services for the student. Recently, the courts have taken into account social inclusion as well as physical and academic inclusion (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Leal, 1995).

Age and grade appropriate placement is the most controversial component of inclusion because it is based on ideals, values, and goals that are not congruent with the realities of today's classrooms. During the 1980s, major studies of long term integration of students with disabilities were carried out by the California Research Institute. Researchers who studied over 200 classes serving more than 2000 students with disabilities at 20 schools. They found fixed incomes. Students' progress and achievements differed depending on the amount of in-class support they received from teachers, aides, and consultants. The National Education Association also reviewed the direct experiences of many teachers in inclusive classrooms across the United States.

Teachers noted significant progress with special learners as long as they had the resources, administrative support, and adequate time for instructional planning and consultation (Dalheim, 1994). In the NEA's report for inclusive classrooms, teachers who shared their experiences concluded that the task of turning the wheel in the direction of equality was worth it.

The age and grade appropriate component of inclusion is most controversial and divisive because it is based on ideals, values, and goals that are not congruent with the realities of today's classrooms. Proponents of full inclusion assume that the general education classroom can and will be able to accommodate all students with disabilities. They assume that such students can obtain educational and social benefits from the placement. Those who oppose full inclusion argue that, although methods of collaborative learning and group instruction are the preferred methods, the traditional classroom size and resources are often inadequate for the management and accommodations of many students with disabilities without producing adverse affects on the classroom as a whole. Some special education experts, however, believe that some students are unlikely to receive appropriate education without placement into alternative instructional groups or alternative learning environments, such as part time or full time special classes or alternative day schools (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1993; Leiberman, 1988).

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is no single answer to the question of what works because of the tremendous and growing diversity of students attending school today. Cultural and

language diversity in the classroom, for example, means that no single mode of teacher-student relating and no single pedagogical style is likely to be effective for all children in that classroom. Among students with disabilities too, the great variation in their abilities and disabilities underscore the critical importance of the individualized programs that are one of the hallmarks of special education as required by law (U.S. Department of Education, 1992a, p. 102).

CHAPTER III

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

The justification of this study is to examine regular educator's attitudes toward inclusion of special needs students in regular education settings. This was accomplished through the use of the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES). ATIES was developed by Felecia L. Wilzenski to measure attitudes toward including children with various disabilities in regular education classes. The scale contains sixteen items describing social, physical, academic and behavioral problems that may adversely affect functioning in the classroom.

In the administration of the exam, 16 teachers were able to openly express their opinion of inclusion. Each subject was given the ATIES scale. The data were hand-scored and analyzed to determine if negative attitudes were present.

General Procedure

The methodology and procedure employed in this study involved the following:

1. Locate regular education teachers.
2. Randomly select subjects.
3. Administer the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale.
4. Analyze test results to test the hypothesis for this study.

The population for this study was drawn from a random selection of regular education and special education teachers taking graduate courses at Clark Atlanta University. Subjects were administered the scale. The data were analyzed to determine if negative attitudes were present.

Selection and Description of the Measuring

The subjects for this study were drawn from a population of graduate students enrolled at Clark Atlanta University. The subjects were randomly selected.

Instrument

The instrument used to measure teachers' attitudes was the Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES). This instrument seeks to secure in a rather Straightforward fashion a teachers' responses to questions about inclusion. The scale contains sixteen items describing social, physical, academic, or behavioral problems that may adversely affect functioning in the classroom.

Teachers are rated on each of the sixteen domains. Their response can range from strongly agree to strongly disagree with 1 being the least and 6 being the most. The data collected by this instrument was analyzed statistically by hand-scoring.

Research Procedures

The selection of subjects were accomplished by the procedures previously discussed. Sixteen subjects were selected for use in the study. The remaining steps then followed:

1. Subjects were able to express their opinions toward inclusion.
2. Subjects were administered The Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale for 15 minutes.
3. The scale was presented orally.
4. The data were collected and analyzed statistically by hand-scoring.
5. Data were then compiled and presented in description form.

Conclusions and recommendations were presented on the basis of the data obtained.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter contains the results of the statistical analysis of the data related to the study. The data were the results of the Attitudes Toward Inclusion Questionnaire given to 9 regular and 9 special education teachers enrolled at Clark Atlanta University.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were drawn from a population of graduate students at Clark Atlanta University. The subjects were randomly selected. Each subject had been previously identified as a regular education teacher or an exceptional education teacher. The 18 subjects were certified classroom teachers at the T-4 level with five or more years of teaching experience.

Patterns of Data for Each Research Question or Hypothesis

Let x = the possible responses to the questionnaire, where x ranges from 1-6. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= disagree somewhat, 4= agree somewhat, 5= agree, 6= strongly agree. Thus, the expected value of x is:

$E(x)=(x \Pr(X=x)$

$E(x)=1(1/6)+2(1/6)+3(1/6)+4(1/6)+5(1/6)+6(1/6)$

$=1/6(1+2+3+4+5+6)$

$=21/6=3\ ½$

Since there are 16 questions, the expected value for the entire question for both groups is 56.

Descriptive statistics of the 9 regular education and 9 special education teachers indicate a mean of 68.4375 and a median of 67.5 with a standard deviation of 5. The mean responses had a range of 19. Based on the quartiles, 25% had mean responses less than 64.5. Twenty-five percent had mean responses between 67 and 68. Twenty-five percent had mean responses between 68 and 70. Twenty-five percent had mean responses between 70 and 84.

Chi square was used to determine the difference between the expectant value and the observed values of the teachers responses to the questionnaire (see Table 1).

At 5 degrees of freedom, table A.4 of Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh's Introduction to Research Education (1990) shows the regular and exceptional teachers responses about their overall approval of inclusion appears to be significantly different from the expected results based on the chi square test at the $.01 < p < 0.05$ level.

Descriptive statistics of the eight special educators in the area of home environment indicate a mean of 64.75 and a median of 64.5 with a standard deviation of 1.71. Based on the quartiles, 25% had mean responses less than 63.5. Twenty-five percent had mean responses less than 64.5. Twenty-five percent had mean responses less than 66.5. Twenty-five percent had mean responses at 67.

Table 1

Combined Chi-Square Expected Frequencies Under the Null Hypotheses for 8 Regular Education and 8 Special Education Teachers' Attitudes

Teacher Outcome	Exp #	Obtained #	Abs. Differene	Difference Squared	χ^2
1	56	62	-6	36	.642
2	56	63	-7	49	.875
3	56	64	-8	64	1.143
4	56	64	-8	64	1.143
5	56	65	-9	81	1.446
6	56	66	-10	100	1.786
7	56	67	-11	121	2.161
8	56	67	-11	121	2.161
9	56	68	-12	144	2.571
10	56	68	-12	144	2.571
11	56	69	-13	169	3.018
12	56	70	-14	196	3.5
13	56	70	-14	196	3.5
14	56	74	-18	324	5.786
15	56	77	-21	441	7.875
16	56	81	-25	625	11.161
					χ^2=51.339

Chi square was used to determine the difference between the expectant value and the observed values of the teachers responses to the questionnaire (see Table 2).

Table 2

Chi Square Expected Frequencies Under the Null Hypothses

for 8 Special Educators' Attitudes

Teacher Outcome	Exp #	Obtained #	Abs. Difference	Difference Squared	$\chi 2$
1	56	62	-6	36	.642
2	56	63	-7	49	.875
3	56	64	-8	64	1.143
4	56	64	-8	64	1.143
5	56	65	-9	81	1.446
6	56	66	-10	100	1.786
7	56	67	-11	121	2.161
8	56	67	-11	121	2.161
					$\chi 2$=11.357

Descriptive statistics of the 8 regular education teachers indicate a mean of 64.25 and a median of 70 with a standard deviation of 9.05. Based on the quartiles, 25% of the teachers were at 68. Twenty-five percent were between 69-70. Twenty-five percent were between 70-74, and 25% were greater than 75.5 (see Table 3).

Table 3

Expected Frequencies Under the Null Hypotheses

for 8 Regular Educators' Attitudes

Teacher Outcome	Exp #	Obtained #	Abs. Difference	Difference Squared	$\chi 2$
1	56	68	-12	144	2.571
2	56	68	-12	144	2.571
3	56	69	-13	169	3.018
4	56	70	-14	196	3.5
5	56	70	-14	196	3.5
6	56	74	-18	324	5.786
7	56	77	-21	441	7.875
8	56	81	-25	625	11.161
					$\chi 2$=39.982

Conclusion

The results of the research indicate that 80% of the items on the ATIES were answered in a positive manner and 20% of the questions received negative responses. Based on these results, it is safe to conclude that the majority of the teachers tested had a positive attitude toward inclusion.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The intent of this study was to examine regular and exceptional education teachers' perceptions regarding inclusion. The findings of this study suggested that regular and exceptional education teachers' perceptions of inclusion are not negative. The majority of the group sample agreed with the ATIES questionnaire. These results support those from similar research of Hallahan and Kauffman (1997) and the National Association of State Board of Education Study (1992) in which teachers were asked about their views of inclusive educational practices. The findings of the present studies directly reflect practical experience with educating all students together. Hopefully, engaging in the practice of teaching students in general education settings has the effect of highlighting benefits, while also enhancing the knowledge and skill level of teachers. The small number of participants made any generalization to a large population difficult to project. Furthermore, all respondents might have heard enough about inclusion to know how to respond to questions from a questionnaire on inclusion. This would explain the generally positive views stated about inclusion by all participants. In regards to comparing findings from this study to those of other studies, not only was the number of participants limited, but also respondents represented only one geographic region of the country.

In making recommendations based on this sample of teachers, a couple of suggestions are pertinent. First, teachers should be asked what they need for a successful inclusive environment. Second, training clearly should be made available to teachers who are experiencing inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms, and that training should be responsive to those teachers needs. Third, personal support for those teachers appears to be an important factor. Fourth, access to members from different disciplines and time to meet with them should b provided. Finally, competence and performance-based assessment of inclusive participants should be considered when implementing an inclusive education program.

In conflict with the stated hypothesis, the 16 teachers surveyed had positive attitudes toward inclusion. Although the 8 regular educaators had not taught in an inclusive setting, they tend to have a bright outlook on the future of special education placements. With these kinds of attitudes, along with the appropriate training and resources, these teachers should not have a problem implementing inclusion.

Conclusions About Each Research Question or Hypothesis

The items that the teachers disagreed on were allowing students to stay in regular classes:

1. Whose academic achievement is two or more years below the other students;
2. Who need training in self-help and daily living skills;
3. Who can not control their behavior and disrupt activities;
4. Who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills; and

5. Who cannot hear conversational speech.

The majority of the regular education teachers agreed with the inclusion of special education students.

Implications for Theory

To the regular education teacher

1. The Movement toward inclusion will require different roles for all educators.

2. The ability to individualize instruction, to adopt role release behavior, to feel confident enough to ask for help, to acknowledge diversity as a desirable component of a classroom school environment, and to identify strengths in classrooms by teaching all students in the regular classroom.

To the teacher working in an inclusive setting

1. Teachers must come to grips with the belief that a large percentage of students with disabilities belong in general education settings.

2. Membership in the regular classroom is not a privilege but a right.

3. Providing direct services, exceptional education teachers in grades k-12 and young adulthood work with other professionals who, in turn, teach students with disabilities.

4. Secondary teachers who teach in an inclusive setting must be knowledgeable of a functional or parallel curriculum.

5. In inclusive settings, exceptional education and regular education teachers must frequently act as job coaches and supervise students at all traditional levels.

6. Secondary teachers in inclusive classrooms who teach exceptional/special needs students in resource areas must teach content areas, basic skills, survival skills, or a combination by infusing the quality core curriculum (QCC) when required.

Implications for Policy and Practice

To the administrators

Administrators managing schools that adhere to the policies and procedures of inclusive practices should be sure that all proper support is in place for the students and teachers alike.

Further Research

Further research on this topic could focus on administrator's attitudes toward inclusion and new policies and practices regarding inclusion for the new millennium or year 2001, and academic support services for exceptional students in inclusive settings.

APPENDIX

RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE

Department of Counseling and
Educational Psychology

2-2-98

Dear Ms. Graham,

Thank you for your interest in my work. The materials you requested are enclosed. You may copy the scale (ATIES) as needed for your work

Best wishes in your graduate program

Sincerely,
Filicia Widzinski

Providence RI 02908-1991
(401) 456-8023
TDD (401) 456-8066

ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SCALE

This scale concerns "inclusive education" as one method of meeting the legal requirements for placing students with disabilities in the "least restrictive" educational environment. Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by specialists.

INSTRUCTIONS

On the blank line, please place the number indicating your reaction to every item according to how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please provide an answer for every item.

Strongly Agree 6	Agree 5	Agree Somewhat 4	Disagree Somewhat 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

1 1. Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.

2 2. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.

4 3. Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes.

6 4. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.

5 5. Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.

4 6. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.

4 7. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use braille should be in regular classes.

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6 9. Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.

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ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SCALE

This scale concerns "inclusive education" as one method of meeting the legal requirements for placing students with disabilities in the "least restrictive" educational environment. Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by specialists.

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On the blank line, please place the number indicating your reaction to every item according to how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please provide an answer for every item.

Strongly Agree 6	Agree 5	Agree Somewhat 4	Disagree Somewhat 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

1 1. Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.

2 2. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.

5 3. Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes.

6 4. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.

5 5. Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.

3 6. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.

3 7. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use braille should be in regular classes.

4 8. Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.

6 9. Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.

5 10. Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.

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